

Minutes for the ABAC meeting of October 15, 2014
Approved November 19, 2014

Board members present were Jack Johnson, Scott Smith, Christopher Tonkin, Doug Greenfield, Phil Goff, Ron Sender and Stephan Miller. Also in attendance were Pam Edwards, Alex Stotic, T.J. Kelly, Susan Stamp, Stephen Quinn, Mike Grunder and Joey Glushko.

The meeting was called to order at 7:29 pm.

Ballot question #5—The adoption of the Community Preservation Act. Susan Stamps told us that the Community Preservation Act is a state law that can be adopted by cities and towns. The law requires a small surcharge on the property tax. This money can then be used for open space, community housing or historic preservation. The State matches the funds at a given percent which changes every year. The CPA must be approved by the legislative branch of the town government and a majority of the residents by ballot. Arlington Town Meeting has approved this measure. If the act is adopted, Town Meeting is responsible for appropriating the money to various projects. Most of the surrounding cities and towns have adopted the CPA and are currently reaping the benefits. There is a CPA website which lists the particulars.

Susan asked for ABAC's endorsement for the adoption of the act in Arlington. There was some discussion about what such an endorsement would mean. Scott asked what percentage of the State's population has endorsed the CPA. The answer was that about 40% of the cities and towns have adopted the law. Doug asked whether there is a down side to endorsement. No one could think of any except a slight increase in property taxes. Susan explained that this is a very progressive tax with liberal exemptions for low income families.

*Phil moved that the ABAC board endorse the Town's adoption of the CPA. The vote to endorse was unanimous.

COBWEB—cops on bikes. Two officers from the Arlington Bicycle Police visited our meeting to answer any questions about enforcement of the laws on and off the Bikeway. Scott gave a summary of our point of view. We wish to see equitable enforcement of traffic laws for all modes but feel that there is a growing problem with scofflaw cyclists. We discussed the recent controversy about the Mill St. and Lake St. Bikeway crossings. One of the officers asked about the origin of the traffic beacon at Mill St. Scott summarized the dangers of that intersection and added that the signal was underwritten by the nearby apartment development. Phil asked how many citations have been issued to cyclists. The officers couldn't say but that information is available from the police statistics department. We were told that patrols of the path have been increased and can be via bike, motorcycle or patrol car. The reason for the motor patrolling is economic. We then discussed the wisdom of licensing bicycles and bicyclists. The officers suggested that we register our bikes with the APD.

Approval of the minutes for the last meeting. The minutes for the September ABAC meeting were approved after being amended.

TAC report. Scott asked us whether the Bicycle Accommodation Road Design Matrix has been shown to the Selectmen (BoS). We couldn't determine the answer. Scott suggested that TAC take the initiative and present the matrix to the BOS. Scott also told us that the DPW would be more comfortable in following our recommendations for striping newly paved roads after the plan has BoS approval.

Lake St Bikeway crossing. Scott told us that the TAC working group met at the site and decided that something must be done about the auto traffic at rush hour. The issues about the signal: push button or automatic, walk signal or bike signal and what will the relationship be between the new Bikeway signal and the existing signal at Brooks Rd. TAC will be researching bike signals in other communities. We then had a discussion about practices in other cities and countries. TAC would like to do some more due diligence before presenting the solution to the BoS. Phil told us that EALS has concerns about a signal at the Bikeway crossing causing cars to cut through the neighborhood. They would like to take this potential problem into consideration and provide some mitigation to discourage cutting through.

Christopher asked about the Arlington Center crossing plan. Scott answered that all the approvals are in and construction should begin in the spring.

Upcoming tri-community meeting. We discussed the topics that will be on the agenda. Joey told us that she discussed the RFP for the Bikeway signage contract with Toole Design with Lexington's John Livsey and Toole's Nick Jason. She asked the Town Manager (TM) if Arlington would like to join Lexington in the contract. The TM suggested that we let Lexington take the lead in designing the signs and then he will file a warrant article in Town Meeting to pay for similar signs in Arlington. We will also evaluate Lexington's recommendations and determine if they are appropriate for Arlington. There are a number of groups in Arlington that would be interested in participating in planning the off Bikeway signage. Joey suggested that we include such groups in our deliberations.

Christopher brought up the need for repaving and patching the Bikeway. Phil asked if there is anything pertaining to the paving of the Bikeway in the Town's master plan. Joey answered that there is no specific provision for the repaving. Christopher will contact the DPW to find out if there are any ongoing plans for maintenance of the Bikeway pavement.

Gold's Gym Bikeway entrance. Joey talked to the DPW about warning signs at the entrance to the Bikeway near the gym as there have been several accidents at that intersection. Mike Rademacher suggested that we make a recommendation to the BOS and get their approval, then the DPW can act. We discussed the importance of the entrance and what we can do to make it safer. Stephan suggested that it is part of the question of Bikeway user's etiquette. Joey volunteered to contact the management of the gym to get their cooperation.

Winter Social. Joey spoke to the TM about his interest in moderating the cyclist/pedestrian interaction discussion and he is ready to do the job. Christopher asked who should participate. Phil suggested that we ask people from outside Arlington. He also suggested some people to ask. Phil volunteered to invite several people associated with Livable Streets, and David Watson, former executive director of MassBike. Joey suggested that we invite a police officer.

Other topics.

Bikeway User Counts. Joey told us that the last count in September was the highest ever. She added that many users commented that the Bikeway was getting overcrowded. We discussed the merits and possibility of widening the Bikeway. Jack declared that the best way to reduce crowding is to build more bikeways.

I Can Shine Camp. Stephen gave us a report on the I Can Shine Camp at which he volunteered. He thought the camp was very worth while and he felt that he really helped some kids to become more proficient on bicycles. He also told us that the Bruce Freeman trail is being lengthened.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12.

*Denotes that a vote of the board was taken.

Minutes submitted by Stephan Miller